

I. First of all, then, what elements are traditionally associated with the meaning of Christmas?

Traditional elements may be classified into those that are primarily secular, and those that are primarily religious.

A. Traditional Secular Elements consist of traditional symbols and traditional actions.

1. Traditional symbols include:

- a. Santa Claus (or Saint Nicholas, or Senta Klaas, or Kris Kringle)
- b. The Christmas Tree (or the Tannenbaum)
- c. colored lights
- d. holly
- e. mistletoe
- f. candles
- g. the Yule log
- h. bells
- i. candy canes
- j. the colors red and green
- k. toys
- l. snow (in temperate climates)
- m. Christmas songs

All these are traditional secular symbols associated with Christmas. But there are also traditional secular actions associated with the observance of Christmas.

2. Traditional secular actions include:

- a. the exchanging of gifts
- b. the sending of greetings, usually through cards
- c. the gathering of families
- d. the Christmas feast
- e. the visiting of relatives and friends
- f. the giving of something to the poor and needy
- g. Christmas shopping

Besides these traditional secular elements, there are also traditional religious elements associated with the observance of Christmas.

B. These Traditional Religious Elements include:

- 1. The Christmas Story
- 2. Christmas carols
- 3. special musical programs
- 4. special church services
- 5. nativity scenes (or creches)

All of these are elements that have traditionally been associated with Christmas.